

# California GARDEN

FORTY-FIRST YEAR

AUTUMN, 1950

VOLUME 41, NO. 3

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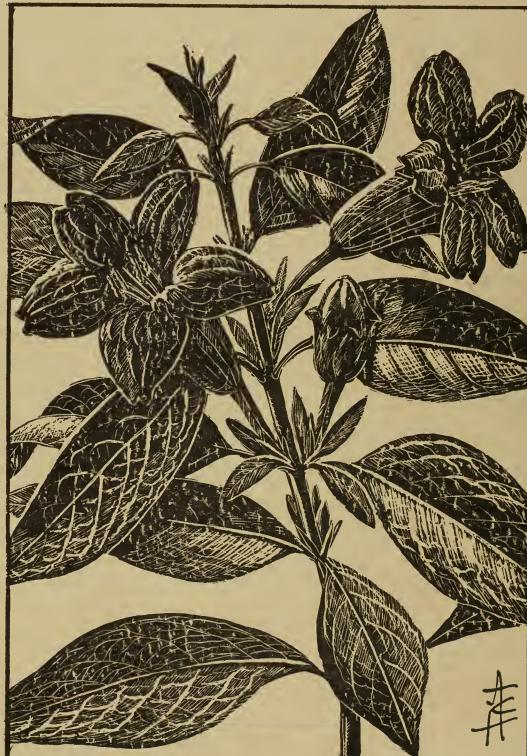
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Ruellia macrantha — Alfred Hottes

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Unless otherwise stated, the following meetings will be held in the Floral Association Building, southwest of the Organ, in Balboa Park.

## SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 3 1 to 5 p.m.

## Open House

Exhibit of garden roses and plants  
Courtesy of The San Diego Rose Society

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 8 p.m.

Monthly meeting of Floral Association  
Illustrated Lecture: "Man, Machine and Urbanity"

New trends in home landscape design by L. P. A. Ruocco, A.I.A.

## OCTOBER

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1 1 to 5 p.m.

## Open House

Exhibit—Courtesy of Organic Gardening Club.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17 8 p.m.

Lecture—"Native Plants and Home Landscaping"—Percy Evertts, from Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Gardens.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21

11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22

11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## CHRYSANTHEMUM FESTIVAL

Tea Pavilion, Balboa Park

## NOVEMBER

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5 1 to 5 p.m.

## Open House

Exhibit of Orchids—Courtesy of The San Diego County Orchid Society.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21 8 p.m.

Lecture — "The Home Gardener Views the San Diego County Bulb and Seed Farms"—Mr. D. DeHahn, and representatives of The Encinitas Garden Club.

# California Garden

FORTY-FIRST YEAR

AUTUMN, 1950

VOLUME 41, No. 3

*In this, the first of a new series, the author of "I Married a New Englander," reverts to the delightful style of that book, to bring information on a plant whose sudden rise in popularity has astonished even its long-time devotees.*

## *African Violets*

A New Leaf From The Observers Notebook

by MARION ALMY LIPPITT

"Calling all Amateur Growers of AFRICAN VIOLETS! Come over to my house and let's talk about them. BRING A FACT."

Thus read the postal card lying on top of my morning's mail. Instead of flipping it into the scrap basket, I passed it across the breakfast table to Henry.

"Poor beautiful little plant," mused Henry, after reading the card. "Torn out of South Africa's shady places and organized into platoons of house plants by American enthusiasts."

"Without American enthusiasm we'd still be loving only the dark violet - blue ones," I offered defensively. "Now we have our choice of 175 varieties."

Henry covered his face with his newspaper. A muffled voice said, "The idea makes me want to run and hide. Suppose some enthusiast got hold of me!" The newspaper trembled like a frightened rabbit.

I laughed. "But remember what a warm reception you gave our Pink Beauty?" I asked.

"And do you remember the instruction its donor gave us with it? questioned Henry. He quoted, "It likes a spot of tea about once a month."

We both laughed. Henry's accent was so delightfully British.

"I don't know who dreamed

that one up," I ruminated, "but it certainly worked with Pink Beauty all that winter. I wonder why I ever changed to Plant Tabs every ten days."

"Because you felt it was inconsistent to feed tea to the plants of a household committed to cocoa and postum," Henry volunteered.

"That's right. Also, I thought their name, *Saintpaulia*, was in honor of Saint Paul himself. I couldn't picture Saint Paul indulging in afternoon tea," I concluded.

"Good old Baron Walter von Saint Paul. What a thrill he must have had the day he discovered the flowers on his ranch in South Africa," said Henry, looking as smug himself as an old dog walking down the street with a biscuit in his mouth. He continued, "With african violets to look at and vanilla beans to taste and smell while he tended his rubber trees, the old boy must have enjoyed his life."

By now I had reached for the atlas, which as a settler of disputes, lies on the colonial sideboard beside the big dictionary. These are in lieu of the traditional silver tea service.

"Where was the ranch?" I asked, magnifying glass in hand.

Henry was ready for me. "Here." He pointed. "Near Tanga in the southeastern part of Kenya. The violets were also found in the mountain forests of Numbara. Nice word, Numbara. Numbara, Numbara, Numbara," he repeated rhythmically, as if it were a war chant. "I see now why the plants prefer a diffused light, north or east windows, and indirect breezes." Henry broke off his oration abruptly.

"Why are you smiling?" he asked.

"Etta has several magnificent african violets in her sunny south window."

"What's the answer to that one?" A note of terseness crept into Henry's voice.

"I guess an african violet is unpredictable. It is challengingly individual. To every statement about them I add the words 'generally speaking!'"

I could see that Henry's Yankee resourcefulness was tangling with his dislike of the unpredictable. A New Englander prefers it thus and so — and that's that!

To avoid complications, and because I really wanted to know, I asked, while pouring over the map to let far-away-places become a reality to me: "Was it Baron von Saint Paul who decided the

plants were a gloxinia variety and not violets at all?"

Henry grunted disdainfully. "I'll bet it was that pedantic old father of his, *Hofmarchal* Baron von Saint Paul of Fischbach in Silesia. He received the first specimens. He was president of the Dendrological Society of Germany."

"What in the world is a Dendrological Society?" I asked.

"The study of trees, to you," answered Henry. He turned to look at our row of african violets on their extended sill in the east window.

"The violets have been talking back to the Hofmarchal ever since 1890. Can't you hear them say, 'You may have called us Saint-paulias, put us in the Gesneria family, and declared we were a variety of gloxinia, but the facts remain that we came from South Africa and our original dress was violet-blue. We prefer to be called African Violets.' And african violets they are called by the world at large. African Violets, I salute you!" finished Henry with his best World War II salute. "And," he added, "I respect your dignity and simplicity."

"Shall we accept Etta's invitation to go and talk about african violets?" I asked, rising from the table, and picking up the postal card that had started all the conversation.

"If you promise she won't organize me," said Henry, shaking himself as if to free binding shackles.

"Down, Towser," I said, patting him on the head. "Come, and hear me talk about nematodes."

"What in the love of Heaven are Nematodes?"

"They are definitely not in the love of Heaven," I called back to him over my shoulder, as I went out to feed the cat.

## GOOD SOIL

The morning after we had been to Etta's to talk about growing african violets, I backed through the swinging door into the dining room with a tray carrying scrambled eggs, bacon, postum, orange juice, and whole wheat bread for the toaster. I found Henry bending solicitously over our african violets on their shelf in front of the east window.

He raised his head and sniffed the air like a puppy. "The smell of your bacon rivals the sound of its sizzle," he said.

"Come and taste it on hot buttered toast," I invited, busily transferring the breakfast from the tray to the table.

"First, take a quick glance at this plant of yours," replied Henry. "I'm sure it has nematodes." His expression was that of a troubled parent.

"The scrawny one on the end?" I asked, slipping the bread in the toaster.

"Exactly," answered Henry, obviously torn between his fatherly concern and the lure of breakfast.

"It is hampered by its youth and inexperience, not by nematodes," I reassured him.

Henry sighed with evident relief. "Your description of nematodes last evening was so graphic that brigades of roots with small knots on them picketed my bed all night. They carried placards: 'Poor soil did this to us.' He did not sterilize his soil. 'He did not fumigate his soil.'

Henry himself was so graphic that I found myself laughing and choking on hot postum.

Finally I managed, "If your midnight visitors circulated as you say, they've never seen a nematode. Nematodes are root knots, caused by poor circulation!"

"Touché," said a voice muffled by bacon and toast.

"Sterilizing your soil can be overdone," I continued in my best platform manner. "Once begun, it must be kept up. The danger is you may purge the good with the bad."

"May a poor layman ask how you sterilize soil?" inquired Henry. His attempt to be an intelligent questioner was hindered by his reaching for the marmalade.

"To sterilize," I answered glibly, "you pour boiling water over the soil in the pot, then cover it with burlap for 24 hours." For good measure, I added with a flourish of statistical pride, "To fumigate is to bake the soil in a shallow pan for 30 minutes at 180 degrees."

Henry bent forward and in a low voice asked, "Tell me confidentially, what does a nematode look like?"

With downcast eyes I replied in a whisper, "I don't know, I never saw one. They say it looks like a round ball on a root."

Henry threw up his hands in disgust. "They say! They say!"

"No," I protested. "I just rely on good soil to begin with."

"And what is your recipe for good soil?" asked Henry, pursuing the mouse to its hole.

This time I reached for my book and read from "The African Violet" by Helen Van Pelt Wilson:

"This is Mrs. Kellar's preferred soil formula:

3 parts black soil (gumbo)  
1 part peat  
1 part compost (about half manure)  
1 part rotted manure  
2 parts sand

She adds to each bushel of this soil mixture:

1 six-inch potful of super-phosphate  
1 gallon of wood ashes containing bits of burnt wood.

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Come! Bring your flowers and friends to share the beauty of Autumn in garden glory and living pictures.



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21 - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22 - - 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**TEA PAVILION . BALBOA PARK**

Arranged by The

SAN DIEGO FLORAL ASSOCIATION

*Our retiring editor has written for us this beautiful essay which is part of the address she gave at the annual meeting of the Floral Association in June. We are most reluctant to have her give up the editorship, but her reason for so doing is that she must work on her book about begonias which she is writing and illustrating. There are many among us who will attempt to keep up the standard she has set for California Garden so that Alice M. Clark may be the signature on more and more beautiful paintings.*

## Green Things Growing

Alice M. Clark

Down through the ages there have always been gardens. Whenever historians have wished to convey the wealth and accomplishments of an era, they have told of its gardens. From the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, from the Greek gardens which were the settings for schools of philosophy, from the formal plots of grass and shrubbery around the splashing fountains of Versailles, we can reconstruct the civilization of the time.

It is most significant that a garden was the chosen setting for the original man, and the drama that evolved around him.

"And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

"And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every living tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil."

Note that the trees were selected for their beauty as well as for their fruits. Since the apple of discord was eaten we have wandered far afield but a primitive instinct in every gardener's heart moves him to try to recreate the tranquility of that first paradise, in his own small plot.

It is difficult to say whether gardeners seem to live longer because they are happier or because

they had healthful outdoor lives, but insurance companies would do well to subsidize them. Our own Kate Sessions, John Morley, Alfred Robinson, Mary Greer and George Marston carried their years lightly. John McLaren was planting redwood seed at Golden Gate Park in his early nineties. Rosarian Horace McFarland, penned his last article at eighty-nine. David Fairchild, just past fourscore, works among his palms in Florida, while Liberty Hyde Bailey, now ninety-two, traveled to the tropics last year for palms. When gardeners appear Father Time must hobble off to others whose avocations give them time to grow old.

To the uninitiated, a gardener is a strange person whose compositions never reach the perfection of his mental pictures. When you admire his colorful snapdragons, he always sighs, "But you should have been here last week when that bed of stock was in full bloom." If you exclaim over the brilliance of a mass of azaleas, he bemoans the fact that the primulas in the border are late showing color. If you say nothing, he is disappointed. If you admire one special plant, he tells you, at great length, how much food, water and spraying it took to bring about such beauty. Woe betide you if you mention another garden that has better blooms. You may not know it, but you have lost a friend. Another warning—

never ask to see a plant you have given away. If it is doing well you will hear about it, if not, leave the dead past to the compost pile.

For some reason the garden frocks of women are the source of amusement to men, who always seem to look just right, no matter what they wear. Sometimes the plant devotee is slim and efficient in slacks, but often she is just as efficient though not so slim. Many, knowing the plants won't care, favor old sweaters, snagged skirts and rundown shoes but are strangely embarrassed when you call. The serious horticulturist is critical of a garden where a worker appears in colorful smock and drooping garden hat. If no flaws are found, she is heard to murmur, "I always find smocks too warm for comfort." Often the lady of the house, stepping out to bring in the morning paper, pulls a few weeds from the lawn, ties up the fuchsia in the side bed, and then decides to cut back the viola border. When the milkman comes she ducks behind the hibiscus bush before slipping into the house to appease those sudden pangs of hunger.

Gardening has facets to attract all types of persons, scientist, explorer, collector, hybridizer, artist, civic worker or just plain grower. All can be absorbed in some phase of horticulture. Once you come under Nature's spell, subtly but surely your character is changed.

The first thing you discover is that gardening is not an affair of your own, but a partnership with the elements. You must be an optimist to cooperate with Mother Nature. She may send a drought or a flood, heat or frost, a new pest or old ones, or all of them in course of the year. You prop up the plants that survive, noting how and why they pulled through, and plan another scheme for tomorrow. Living things keep you too busy to bewail your losses.

You not only forget yourself, but you begin to think of others. Gardeners have an irresistible urge to share. The exceptional few who make a garden to inflate their own egos, are badly cheated by their self-interest. A beautiful plant is an inspiration. You want others to enjoy it so you are glad to tell them how to grow it, not to show your own skill, but that they may have it too. When nature, in her prodigal way, returns compound interest on chrysanthemum plants or dahlia tubers, gardeners cannot rest until they have persuaded someone to grow the surplus stock. Thus they have the satisfaction of spreading the gospel of beauty through a whole neighborhood.

You cannot plant alone. You must compare notes with others to see if you may profit or help them. A love of plants will lift the latch of any garden gate and establish an instant bridge of understanding that makes strangers, friends. As you circulate, you soon know the fellowship of like-minded groups as well as individuals. You join a floral association and, before you know it, you have entered an exhibit in a show. Nor will you ever forget the first ribbon you win! Later you will make entries just for the fun of being part of the bustle and excitement of a show, which is to the garden-

er what the smell of sawdust is to the circus clown.

A garden is an outlet for your own self-expression and, as such, is not a fair subject for criticism. Don't apologize for it—let it speak for itself. Only your closest friends will understand that it is full of dreams—a kaleidoscope of some gorgeous chrysanthemums that will be over there this fall, mixed with the blossoms of the apricot tree that bloomed last spring, and the torch of poinsettias that will flame down the center in the winter, the whole superimposed on the Mayday corsages that the pelargoniums are flaunting right now. Pictures of the past and rosy hopes for the future are blended together in a garden until you echo the lines of Dina Craik:

"O the green things growing,  
the green things growing,  
The faint sweet smell of the  
green things growing.  
I should like to live, whether I  
smile or grieve  
Just to watch the happy life of  
my green things growing."

You may be as learned or as simple about gardening as you please. Whether you have a few potted plants indoors, a pocket-handkerchief patio, or an estate, the one essential is that you like plants. Gardening might be hard work to some, but it is the essence of life itself to one who loves it. When you follow your heart's desire, it is not work.

Gardening is a three-dimensional affair that leads you into a fourth proportion. Hourly in touch with nature, you constantly see cause and effect. You begin to sense a meaning over and beyond all this. You observe that, whether a plant is the center of attention or hidden beneath a shrub, it fulfills itself in bloom, with or without an audience. It is.

Regardless of size, the seeds of

an avocado and the grain<sup>5</sup> of begonia dust, know just what to bring forth. It is hard to realize that a powder-like begonia seed has such a complex mechanism in its infinitesimal makeup, that one will produce a rex begonia with jewel-colored leaves, while another will bear a tree-like plant with feathered, palmate leaves. The old adage, "As ye sow, so shall ye reap," is impressed upon you. To be sure, a few weeds pop up here and there, but you know they are not in the scheme of things, so out they come, and on with the plan!

When you have watched this miracle of growth for a number of years, you stop trying to reason. You know that, as there is a pattern in the stars of the sky and the seeds of the earth, there is surely one for us who are beneath the skies and above the ground. You feel the strength of the soil. Its steadiness reaches within and you catch the tune of life, deep down in your heart. You find you have only to live with the faith of a plant, fulfilling your promise, regardless of whether you have other worldly goods. Bliss Carmen has expressed it thus:

"Sharing time's freshness and  
fragrance  
Part of the Earth's great soul.  
Here man's spirit may ripen  
To wisdom, serene and whole."

Let's be thankful for the privilege of living in a climate where we are close to green growing things every day. In the quiet of the garden the turmoil of the world is stilled. We begin to sense the art of living and catch a glimpse of the joy of being. Working with nature gives us a feeling of unity, of belonging to something greater than ourselves. Perhaps, when everyone is in touch with a garden, we shall have peace.

In our Summer number, the illustrated article on Acacias began a series about interesting trees in Southern California. Those who have heard the author's lectures, copiously illustrated with plant materials, will welcome this permanent record of his discussions, made real by the graphic drawings of an understanding artist.



## Some *Eucalyptus* Varieties

C. I. JERABEK

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SALLY BANCROFT

Though many people living in Southern California think the eucalypts are natives of this state, they were introduced in 1856. Since then they have been extensively planted for fuel and shade.

The name, *Eucalyptus*, is a Latinized Greek compound made up of *eu*, meaning well, and *kalypto*, to cover, as with a lid. There are more than 300 species, chiefly Australian, in this great genus. Some of the species are gigantic in size, others are of a shrubby nature. Likewise there is a great variation in foliage appearance, with colors ranging from dark or bluish green to gray. Some trees produce abundant shade, while the leaves of others are very sparse.

All eucalyptus flowers are completely covered by an individual cap or lid. As the blossom develops, the cap is pushed off, allowing the flower to expand to its full size. The blossom is made up of a bundle of stamens and stigma, instead of petals. The flowers are similar to the Myrtle, to which family the *Eucalyptus* belongs.

*Eucalyptus polyanthemos*, (many-flowered) is commonly called Redbox, Australian-beech and now and then ("Dollar Eucalypt") is usually a middle-sized tree, from 60 to 80 feet in height and 2 feet or more in diameter. The bark is persistent, slightly furrowed, and grayish in color. The branchlets are very slender with ovalish or even roundish gray

green leaves that are sometimes ashy in hue. Occasionally the leaves will take on an oval-lanceolate shape. The small blossoms, which are borne mostly in many-flowered panicles, are then followed by very small seed-cups.

The beautiful planting of *E. polyanthemos* along Highway 101 from the top of Rose Canyon grade nearly to Torrey Pines, is familiar to most motorists. Among the many trees of this variety in Balboa Park are those back of the out-door organ, and northeast of the bowling green. There are also three specimens in front of the La Jolla Library.

*Eucalyptus rostrata*, commonly called Redgum, it also mentioned as Floodedgum or Rivergum.

The specific name, suggested by the shape of the bud, means beak-like. It is a native of Western and Southern Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. In its native habitat it is generally found growing along rivers, creeks or alluvial valleys, but here in San Diego, one may find it in lawns or in the poor soil of canyons and steep hillsides.

If given sufficient water, this Redgum will develop into a large umbrageous tree, with a trunk that is proportionately stout. The bark comes off the branchlets in thin scales, or small sheets, but often stays on near the base of the tree, until it forms coarse layers, furrowed by deep cracks. The numerous narrow-lanceolate green leaves on reddish twigs generally hang down in graceful festoons. What the flowers lack in size they make up in numbers. (Note in the illustration how they radiate like the spokes of a wheel from a central upright axle flower.) This species, as well as *E. polyanthemos*, is a profuse bloomer, and is generally alive with myriads of bees during the flowering periods. Both stand drought and heat, but *E. rostrata* is hardier to frost.

*Eucalyptus ficifolia* is also known as the Scarlet-flowering Gum. The specific name of this gorgeous flowering tree, which was chosen before the brilliancy of its flowers was known, alludes to the similarity of the leaves to some varieties of the Ficus. The large buds have dome-like lids and bright scarlet filaments. (There are variations in numerous shades of red, orange, pink and white.) The seed-cups are thick, woody and very urn-shaped.

The three species of this discussion are widely divergent. Varieties more closely related, will be taken up at another time.

Roland Hoyt, landscape architect in charge of the San Diego Mission Beach Recreation Area, gives thought to the seldom-discussed subject of plant selection for seacoast gardens in Southern California.

## Proven Plants for Beach Areas

ROLAND S. HOYT

All vegetation, trees, shrubs, vines, bulbs, the material of the gardener, is the result of some environment, such as chaparral, bush, veldt, steppe, jungle, heath or alkali flat, to mention only a few areas. The ages, with time to spare, have developed mutants that possess fixed characteristics of resistance or compatibility, so that they come to us prepared for certain eventualities. Do we use them with that in mind, or do we immediately endeavor to make them over? Modification is an appropriate word. It might indicate the extent of change we should seek. A generation is only a biological minute in evolution, so why not solve our problems by choosing from the species already existant, each with some special aptitude or characteristic.

Plants growing under wind-blown salt and the fine silt of fresh dredging, labor under as severe conditions as any found in Southern California. If this is doubted by people who garden in the hot interior valleys, it only points up the necessity of looking closely for species adapted to any given set of conditions.

Eric Walther tells of the difficulties encountered by the early builders of Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. There they literally had to plant the dunes to hold the sand in place while installations were being made. A similar situation prevails on Tierra del Fuego Island in the new Mission Bay Recreation Area of San Diego, California, where the trade

winds put steady pressure on flat, sandy stretches. All summer, and winter, storms beat vegetation until the foliage is caked with driven silt, like the snow of colder climates. A look at like littorals of the world and an appraisal of the species found, would be the first step in planting such an area . . . next the trial.

A preliminary report on species that have stood successfully under the barrage of the first year on this sand would include *Leptospermum laevigatum*, which incidentally was one of the prime materials used in sealing off the sand in San Francisco. We now have a dense form of this species that makes a low blue-green, tight mass, generally known as var. *compacta*. It makes viable seed that comes nearly fifty percent true to type in the nursery in Collier Park. Gardeners will find this a valuable material where the drainage is sharp. The flowers are white, as in the type form, but the picturesque quality of stem and shaggy flaking bole, is missing.

Several large specimens of Brisbane Box *Tristania conferta*, were set out in this ground last fall, and have given a good account of themselves. The trees came from Balboa Park, and were planted under the handicap of a poor root system, but took hold nicely. Now there are hopes that the bold head of large leaves and the handsome, warm-red trunks will serve many generations of young model-yachtsmen. It is surprising how

like the Madrona this tree is. It may be seen in some maturity in Old Town Square.

The Veronicas, now correctly known as *Hebes*, have long been accepted as first rate material in saline wind. Here they are living up to that good name, especially two species: *Hebe andersoni*, a species, low to the ground, with deep blue flowers; and *H. carnea*, taller, more open in form, with deep pink meads.

*Westringia rosmariniformis* is comparatively new. It has the foliage of rosemary, (another notable shrub for the seashore) and fine white or lavender-tinged flowers. It appears that this plant may be one of our best for low covering effects. It will make a fair garden shrub, if grown in dryish ground and pinched back from time to time to compact it.

For many years *Eucalyptus lehmanni* has been growing in the full force of the wind and in delightful wind-blown shapes along La Jolla Boulevard. Many of these trees have died, probably due more to neglect and drought than to exposure. In Mission Bay Park they look very well after a year of tough going, and it is expected that they will give good service with the deeper footing and better care. This variety of eucalyptus was one of George Marston's favorites, and it may be seen repeatedly in Presidio Park. It is low, round-headed and widely branched. The foliage is tough and bronzy. The queer, twisted fingerlike seed capsules, embedded in the wood of the secondary branches, and persisting for years, make it easy to recognize.

There will be many palm species used in the Bay Area, as the years go on. This is partly because the palm is peculiarly fitted to take the wind, but primarily for a deeper reason—that of a root

system adapted to a high brackish water table.

*Phoenix reclinata*, the Senegal Datepalm, is one of the most beautiful. Its clustered, bending stems and handsome mop of long fronds, weave about in the wind without damage. Six large trees were taken from a narrow parking in East San Diego and are now growing well on the island. They stood at first as a typical desert scene against the model-yacht house, with nothing round-about but sand. In the nursery, several thousand of these trees are coming along from seed obtained from the palm-lined Prado in Balboa Park.

*Muehlenbeckia complexa*, the Wirevine, seen sometimes in tumbled climbing masses in older parts of the city, has been resurrected from its homely past, to serve on cable barriers around parking plots on the island. No one would want to plant this unless for conditions of wind, sea, fire or other calamity. It is not to be found in any nursery that we have been able to locate, but Mr. Bishop has it now.

*Acacia verticillata* (see illustration No. 8 on page 2 of Summer issue of this magazine), may be spreading shrub or it may be a small slender tree, if against a building or forced into the air by surrounding planting. In the full wind, which it is taking superbly, it is splaying on the ground almost as a cover. Where it has another plant running any sort of interference, it raises itself in its usual shape. Its foliage is a wealth of deep-green short needles forming whorls that do not sear in the wind. The flowering is pale yellow, in little cylinders in the spring. It is well worth consideration in normal plantings for dry banks, where the weight of the herbage tends to lower the form to fit the situation.

The Monterey Pine, *Pinus radiata*, has been set along Ingraham Avenue as it crosses the island. It is expected that this tree will get up into the wind, not with typical loose texture, but dense and more or less windblown. It has much to recommend it for many uses at the seashore, even in as severe a spot as this surely is.

One has seen pictures of cattle with tails to the weather, drifting in a blizzard. There is that one of the Indian bent over his pony, the beast itself eloquent in depicting the blast harrowing it along. In like character, *Melaoluca armillaris*, one of the white bottle-brushes, has stood out in the very teeth of the wind, alone as a specimen plant, and without the mutual protection of neighbors. Note that again we have the needle-type leaf as very adaptable, a rugged constitution, and the ability to give under stress and come back. This bush is more or less common to domestic plantings, although most planters do not allow for ultimate size. It develops an umbrageous head normally, above twisting, picturesque stems that become bare in age and as much as four to five inches through.

We learn, with experience . . . or do we? It has taken a Korea to show up again our flabby spots and the misuse or, at best, misplacement of our strength. Gardeners everywhere will work more surely, if they will only take time out in the beginning to look into past experience, their own or that of others, and find such materials as have been "proven" on testing grounds that relate to their problems. There is more to planting than color and form and texture. The plant must be fit and equal to the task. It must work and survive if there is to be any permanence.

*California Garden* is fortunate to bring to its readers this article by Katherine Morrison McClinton, of New York, formerly a resident of San Diego and daughter of a longtime director of the S.D.F.A. Mrs. McClinton is an eminent authority and lecturer on art and interior decoration, about which she has published many articles and books.

## The Place of Flowers in Home Decoration

KATHARINE MORRISON MCCLINTON

Much has been written about flower arrangement and far too little is said about what you are going to do with the flowers when they are arranged. Indeed, the selection of flowers and plants and their placing in a room is just as important, if not more important, than their arrangement. For example, a prize winning arrangement in a lighted box at a flower show or a stunning arrangement made in one's pantry or flower room may have no distinction at all when placed on a table in a living room, unless the flowers were chosen, and the arrangement planned for that particular table in that particular living room.

Flowers should be a necessary and vital part of a room and not an added accessory or second thought. Thus they should harmonize not only with the color, but also with the lines, of the furniture and they should be a part of the tone pattern of the room, as well as pick up the general spirit of the room.

When you are in the florist's or in your garden cutting flowers for the house, stop and think: What room are the flowers for? If you are selecting flowers for the living room, what color are the walls? What color the rug, the upholstery, the draperies? Do you want to accent the furnishings with contrasting flowers, or harmonize

with flowers of related hue? Flowers should have an importance against their background and an arrangement against a light wall will call for darker tones than the wall, while one against a dark wall will need flowers lighter than the wall. Flowers can be made to stand out against an ornate background also by means of value contrast.

A room with a monochromatic color scheme is effective with white flowers. Generally speaking, low keyed rooms should have little color in their flower arrangements whereas a sumptuous room with deep color tones needs rich colored flowers. A white room is bare and seems to need masses of flowers or growing plants.

In a room where there are already too many different colors, either use white flowers, an arrangement of related values of one hue, or an arrangement of leaves or foliage of various kinds without flowers.

The next factor to consider is, where you are going to place the arrangement. Is it for the mantel? The large table? The piano? The coffee table? When you know where you are going to place the arrangement this will help you decide not only the color, but the size of the bouquet and the scale of the flowers. It will also help you to decide on the vase or

container, and on the type of arrangement. Certain places, such as a coffee table, seem to call for a low container and some tables might need a tall vase. This is determined somewhat by the height of the table or mantel, or the shape and size of the background wall space. The shape and texture of the container will be determined by the character of the furnishings of the room. When you have decided on your vase you will know better what type of arrangement you are going to make, that is, whether it will be a line or mass arrangement, whether it will be vertical or horizontal. Of course, it is possible to arrive at your final decisions by reversing this order since your table or mantel might dictate where you wanted a vertical or a horizontal arrangement and you would choose your vase accordingly.

Not only is the placing of an arrangement important with relation to the room, but the number of bouquets and their relationship to each other is of the utmost importance in staging your flowers in your rooms. Do not over crowd a room with too many bouquets; it is better to err with too few.

One arrangement should be dominant in the room. That is, one should be the large arrangement or attract most attention because of its color or distinction.

This is usually the mantel or piano bouquet, but it may be the arrangement on a large table. There may then be one or two secondary bouquets and one or two tertiary arrangements. The dominant arrangement may be dominant in color and material as well as size; that is, it could include many varieties of flowers and many colors. It should set the spirit and color scheme for the rest of the arrangements in the room. The secondary arrangements can have some, but not all, of the varieties of flowers, and should have the same colors but could be a related or complementary color scheme where the dominant arrangement would be a triad color scheme. The tertiary bouquets could be not only small in size, but could use fewer or only one variety of flower or one color. Arrangements may also be made to dominate by size alone where the colors of the other arrangements may accent or complement each other. Not long ago, I saw a simple example of dominant and subordinate arrangements in a rather formal room. A huge bouquet of madonna lilies was the dominant arrangement. A pair of arrangements of yellow coreopsis and columbine on a long table were the secondary bouquets and picked up the yellow of the lily stamens; while a small spray of lavender orchids growing in a jade vase on the coffee table was the color complement and the tertiary bouquet.

A safe way to avoid over-crowding a room with flowers is to arrange them in pairs of vases rather than having too many separate and different arrangements.

Flowers can often bring light into a dark corner, but usually it is best to place an arrangement of flowers where it can be seen in de-

tail and admired. A bouquet placed before a mirror is reflected and doubly enjoyed. Flowers show best when placed low in the room. Also it is advisable to place flowers near lamps so that they can be seen at night.

Catching the spirit of a room in your flower arrangements is not so difficult if you happen to have a home of some definite style, such as Victorian. A Victorian room calls for Victorian arrangements, in Victorian containers with old-time flowers. Examples are plentiful in books on flower arrangement and in flower show exhibits. But what to do and how to catch the spirit of your small 12' x 15' living room in a nondescript house or apartment! Perhaps your furnishings don't have any character or spirit. What are you going to do? Well, one thing you are not going to do is to put hot house roses or lilies-of-the-valley or any other glamorous flowers in your simple non-committal living room. You *will* choose flowers and vases in color harmony with your room. If your furniture is stocky you *will* choose sturdy flowers, such as zinnias, daisies, or stock. If your furniture is graceful and curved line, choose flowers with graceful stems and more graceful shapes, such as petunias.

Flowers as well as inanimate objects take on qualities of simplicity or grandeur, and when you think of them as having such characteristics it is easier to choose the suitable varieties for your rooms. Here are a few examples which may start you thinking. The rose and the lily are stately and formal in line, while the marigold and the daisy are informal and simple. The iris and the lily are distinctive in form while the phlox and the larkspur and the

aster are noted more for their color. The large chrysanthemum and the button chrysanthemum suggest variety in scale among flowers. Zinnias and dahlias have widely variant textures and for that reason do not combine well. Also certain flowers have been assigned adjectives in literature which are descriptive of their various degrees of impressiveness; for example, the modest violet, the humble daisy and the regal lily.

With this hint of the characteristics of flowers one should be able to avoid such inconsistencies as orchids or American Beauty roses on a gateleg table with peasant pottery. Instead, some modest flower, such as the snapdragon or the nasturtium would help to enhance the simple setting.

The right flower arrangement can often make up for deficiencies in the decoration of a room, especially when the room is under-decorated rather than over-decorated. For example, I remember a room whose only mantel decoration was a flower arrangement which carried the color scheme of the chintz draperies around the room. When you use flower arrangements in a room with a floral figured wallpaper or rug, the flowers of the rug or wallpaper can be reproduced in the natural flower arrangement with resulting harmony. Also, I know of a clever woman who has a lamp with a Chelsea base and she reproduces the bouquet on the medallion in a natural arrangement of fresh flowers on the table beside the lamp.

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#### FOR FINE PLANTS

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Since tropical plants seem to be the handmaidens of modern architecture, Lewis Walmsley's offering of new foliage forms should serve to relieve the monotony of philodendrons and monsterae.

## Tropical Foliage Plants

LEWIS A. WALMSLEY

At Soledad Gardens approximately an acre of foliage plants are growing in the ground under shade houses. Many of these have been considered as tropicals requiring warm glasshouse conditions. Although located in one of the nearby frost-free spots in the San Diego area, water pipes burst just outside of the tropical plant houses both last winter and the winter before. Considering the number of varieties grown, very few failed to survive the cold. There was quite a bit of foliage loss but with few exceptions recovery was quick and most of them are now in prime condition in spite of the unusually cold spring and summer.

We have learned that one of the general requirements of most foliage plants is a porous, well-drained soil with lots of organic material in it. We have made liberal use of riding stable litter which is composed of shavings, sawdust, horse manure, and some straw, both mixed with our soil and as a mulch on the surface. The bacteria which break down this crude cellulose material to form humus which finally acts as a fertilizer, is a microscopic plant dependent, like other plants, upon fertilizer, chiefly nitrogen, for rapid growth. Sufficient nitrogenous fertilizer must be added to the soil to take care of the tremendous increase in bacteria as well as to feed the crop we are growing. To supply this we have used poultry manure in such quantities as would be destructive on the crop were it not for the requirements of the bac-

teria which use up much of the nitrogen and withhold it from the crop during the process of breaking down the crude cellulose and later return it as improved fertilizer along with the resulting humus to the soil for the use of the crop. With such materials as shavings and sawdust, this process extends over a period of years. It also encourages a large population of angleworms and in our case has almost done away with the menace of nematodes.

The plant which attracts the most attention of visitors to our gardens during the summer is *Alocasia odora*. This has large leaves somewhat resembling *Colocasia* (*Caladium*) *esculenta* (Elephant's ear). The resemblance is especially close in young plants but as they mature they develop sturdy, palm-like trunks bearing many leaves from the crown. They bloom freely in all but the coldest weather. The greenish, calla-like flowers are interesting but not especially beautiful. The fragrance is indescribably pleasing. I say indescribably because no two visitors will agree upon what it resembles. To me it does not resemble anything else that I know, but is in a class by itself. Visitors have described it variously as raspberries, peppermint, violets, and bananas. When weather conditions are just right the perfume will spread through the air fifty to one hundred feet from the plant and yet the odor is delicate and pleasing only an inch from the bloom.

*Alocasia macrorhiza*, a native of

Ceylon, which resembles *odora* in growth, with the leaves a little smaller and more upright and the blooms not nearly so fragrant, is seen more often in gardens around San Diego. We have just acquired three small plants of the variegated form of this which has large white blotches on the leaves and should prove an interesting addition to the garden, especially if it is as hardy as the other two.

We have also recently imported a few small plants of *Alocasia cuprea*, a native of Borneo, with broad, heart-shaped leaves, dark metallic green tinted with plumbed on the upper surface, deep plum-red on the reverse; *A. sanderiana*, with deeply notched leaves, shining olive-green, with broad silver-vein markings on the upper surface; an unidentified variety (which fits the description of *putzeyi*, a native of Sumatra) with broad, arrow-head leaves, prominent white-vein markings on dark metallic green, the under surface dark, violet-purple and an unidentified variety with red leaf-stems, green leaves, the under side tinted with bronze. These are not likely to prove as hardy and it remains to be seen whether they can survive winters under lathhouse conditions.

We tried out *Phaeomerias* (Torch Gingers). Part of them started under lath, rotted and failed to show growth, due to the cold. Some of them were started under glass and then moved to the warmest part in our fields where they are making good growth under full sun. Another importation of the ginger family, *Alpinia sanderae*, with beautifully variegated foliage, looks especially promising and we are trying it out under lath where *Amomum cardamom* with spicy, fragrant foliage, does so well.

*Musa sumatrana*, one of the

*Mrs. Hamilton, whose beautiful gladiolas are the delight of local gardeners, now gives simple and direct steps in the culture of:*

## *Chrysanthemums*

MARIE CLARK HAMILTON

Chrysanthemum season is here. Now is the time to select the beautiful varieties you want to include in your garden next year. Whether you buy them at a reliable nursery, or your neighbors graciously give them to you, now, when the flowers are in bloom, is the planning period for that lovely bed of Chrysanthemums.

While the plants are still in bloom, young shoots will be found at the base of the stem. You may take these young shoots and transplant them at any time. First, however, the planting area must be prepared to receive these new plants.

When plants are received it is an excellent idea to work a liberal amount of bonemeal and peat moss into the spot where you plan to place your plants. This will provide a feeding and a drainage area for the root system of the young plants and stimulate good healthy growth.

*Tropical Plants . Continued from Page 13*

smaller banana trees, with brown blotches on the green upper surface of the leaves and reddish-brown underneath, is a tender subject, intolerant of shade but is thriving under full sun beside the torch ginger.

*Pereskia aculeata godseffiana*, a leafy climber of the cactus family is especially pleasing with its new foliage of claret-bronze, changing to yellow and finally light green, growing on a gray post in our lathhouse. We have not tried it under full sun but believe it would succeed equally well there.

In the spring when new growth starts, about April or May, take from these same plants tip cuttings about three or four inches long. Do not, however, cut them from the hardwood stem. Strip the leaves and set these cuttings out in good sharp sand or vermiculite, keeping them just damp enough to avoid wilting. Allow enough space between each cutting to permit air to circulate. When the roots are one inch long, these cuttings may be placed in their permanent planting place.

After the plants are well established and have started a healthy growth, they may be pinched back. This will cause side branching, and where there was only one shoot growing before there will now be three or four. All plants, the ones started from rooted shoots in the fall and from tip cuttings in the spring, may be pinched back once again in July.

From the first part of July until blooming time it is necessary that we put rapid growth on our plants, therefore, when the last pinch is made, fertilize well with a complete plant food, cultivate around the plants thoroughly, and begin a weekly program of watering deeply until the buds show color.

Exhibition blooms may be obtained by allowing only two to four stems to each plant. Remove all other branches. As the buds begin to appear, select the strongest and healthiest, removing all others. Disbudding will have to be done several times. Should the plant appear to stand still and stems begin to harden you may start them growing rapidly again by a feeding of one tablespoon of sulphate of ammonia dissolved in a bucket of water, for every eight plants. Always water thoroughly when fertilizer is applied.

It must be remembered that aphid, chrysanthemum midge, tarnish plant bug and scale are natural enemies of your flowers, so start your spraying or dusting program early. Products containing lindane will help eliminate most of these pests.

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*Those who know the decorative value of ruellias and their easy culture, will applaud their selection for special attention.*

(See Cover Illustration)

## Ruellias

ALFRED C. HOTTES

One evening, soon after locating in California, I was invited to a home with a lighted patio. Scattered among the other plants was one which arrested my attention immediately because of its large purple-rose flowers, three inches across. I asked its name and found it was far the largest flowering member of a group of plants that I had been growing for years in greenhouses. It was *Ruellia macrantha*, the Lavender Ruellia, from Brazil. The bellshape flowers are produced singly in the axils of the leaves. The foliage is very lush and deeply lined. The shrubs are not very woody and are adapted to pot culture or to the pro-

tected spots of a semishady patio. They bloom in winter but are mentioned at this time so that you may purchase plants now for later bloom. Give the plants a neutral or acid soil. Feed with camellia food. Cut this ruellia back severely every year. If mealy bug attacks, wash with the force of a hose and then spray with Isotox or other recommended insecticide.

Ruellia is named for Jean de la Ruelle, a French botanist. It is related to Acanthus and Jacobinia.

*Ruellia devosiana* is usually grown in pots in lathhouses or a greenhouse as it likes more heat than is found in our fall and winter gardens. This is a spreading,

rather herbaceous shrub with hairy stems and builds up to about eighteen inches tall. The flower is white but the throat is lilac and would be constantly in bloom if the conditions were warm enough. The leaves are elliptical, short-pointed, velvety purple beneath, veined white above.

*Ruellia makoyana* resembles the above but the flowers are carmine. The leaves are lanceshape with distant teeth. It seeds freely.

The Minneroot Ruellia, *R. tuberosa*, coming from Texas and South America, is about three feet tall and has thickened tuberous roots. In those we see, the flowers are purple but Bailey describes them as blue or white so we may be growing the wrong species. The flowers form terminal panicles of bloom. The leaves may be quite purple. One treats this as a herbaceous perennial by cutting back plants each year.

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*September:* Much of what you do in this busy month will determine the success of your winter and spring gardens . . . This is bulb time. Be sure to follow directions for planting depth, especially with daffodils and narcissus. If set too near the surface they will send forth foliage before roots begin to develop. Use no more than an inch-deep layer of compost or well-rotted manure worked evenly into the soil before planting. Too much humus holds the water and causes the bulbs to rot. Plant the following bulbs now: daffodils, Dutch and Spanish iris, watsonia, and freesia . . . If not done earlier, divide older bearded iris clumps and replant for better bloom. . . . Groom your chrysanthemums for the show. Select bloom buds and keep all others pinched off, if you want larger flowers. Push them with liquid manure once a week (skipping one week every second feeding) until color shows in the buds, as they are gross feeders. Water by trenching . . . Start a new lawn or renovate and reseed an old one. Proper soil preparation spells the difference between success and failure. The more compost, well-rotted manure and peatmoss you work into a seedbed, the surer you are of an outstanding lawn. Avoid barnyard manure because of its weed seeds . . . Give the garden a good clean-up. Place all the material that is not too woody in the compost pile. Garden debris, thoughtlessly burned or thrown in the trash barrel is robbing the

## Your Garden

ROBERT H. CALVIN

life of your soil. The microbial and fungus life in the soil depends on rotting vegetation for food. Without it, your plants suffer because of the unbalance created. Finish with a clean-up spray. One containing pyrethrum and rotenone, used double strength, will give the desired results. Sprays toxic to humans and animals should not be used by the home gardener . . . Fertilize roses, apply a mulch of compost and water freely for fall and winter bloom. Cut out weak spindly growth and all dead wood back to a live bud. . . . Do not fertilize citrus or avocados now, nor water too often. Growth should harden-off for the winter . . . Prepare trenches for sweetpeas, to be planted October 1. Use only well-rotted manure, working it into the soil in the bottom of the trench. . . . Plant winter vegetables now . . . Sow these flower seeds in the open ground to cover bare spots: linum, nemesia and viscaria. Use schizanthus in the shade.

*October:* Continue planting bulbs for winter and spring bloom. Put in amaryllis, regal and madonna lilies, ixias and baby glads . . . Try some of the sweetpea seeds that are coated with a growth stimulant and tinted for color selection. If using bare seeds, soak several hours before planting. Water thoroughly at planting, then do not water again until they are up . . . Divide the following perennials: agapanthus, michaelmas daisy, campanula, shasta daisy, daylily, anemone japonica, coral-

bell and dianthus . . . Lift, cure and store gladiolus corms when the tops turn brown . . . Pinch back the top growth of calendula, stock, penstemon, and snapdragons to make a bushier plant with more bloom . . . Always put out slug and snail bait when transplanting young seedlings . . . Plant Japanese iris now. Sink them in a wooden tub in the shallow water of the lily pool for superior growth and bloom . . . Apply well-rotted steer manure to the lawn at this time. Brush it into the turf with the back of the rake . . . Set out cinerarias in a shady place for a spring glory of long duration . . . Scatter wild flower seed in bare spots, rake in and let the winter rains do the rest.

*November:* Catch up on delayed bulb planting. Tulips go in now. Be sure to set them at a depth that is twice the height of the bulb. . . . Keep the watering schedule going unless we get a soaker (3 to 5 inches of rain.) Watering is best done in the morning to give the foliage and the ground a chance to dry before nightfall. Allow potted or tubbed plants other than begonias, camellias, azaleas and related types, to go almost dry before watering . . . It is harvest time for chrysanthemums and roses. Stake and mark your mums while they are in bloom instead of trusting to memory. If you have heeded the suggestions made in the last few months, your garden will be gay with color and richly clad in foliage forms.

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